

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5600

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJ: NEW SOUTH WALES BY-ELECTIONS

REF : SYDNEY 1435 AND SYDNEY 1475

SUMMARY: IN THE TWO STATE BY-ELECTIONS ON SATURDAY, JULY 20, THE NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW) LIBERAL/COUNTRY PARTY GOVERNMENT RETAINED BOTH SEATS. THE COUNTRY PARTY SEAT OF GOULBURN WAS EASILY RETAINED BY RON BREWER, WHILE LIBERAL ROSS FREEMAN IN THE COOGEE SEAT, IS EXPECTED TO WIN NARROWLY WHEN THE FINAL DECLARATION IS MADE IN ABOUT TEN DAYS. END SUMMARY.

1. AT GOULBURN, RON BREWER, WHO RESIGNED HIS STATE SEAT TO RUN FOR FEDERAL PARLIAMENT AT THE MAY 18, 1974 ELECTION AND LOST, WAS RE-RUNNING FOR HIS SEAT WHICH HE WON BY 7,000 VOTES AT THE LAST STATE ELECTION. ALP CANDIDATE, DERMID MCDERMOTT, CUT THIS MARGIN TO ABOUT 4,000 VOTES, BUT NO SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO THIS SINCE VOTER TURNOUT WAS LOWER.

2. AT COOGEE, LIBERAL PARTY'S ROSS FREEMAN HELD A 350 VOTE EDGE OVER ALP'S MICHAEL CLEARY IN A COURT ORDERED RE-RUN OF THE LAST STATE ELECTION WHICH FREEMAN WON BY EIGHT VOTES. DISTRIBUTION OF PREFERENCES OF THE AUSTRALIA PARTY'S 1,009 VOTES, EXPECTED TO GO 75 PERCENT TO THE ALP AND THE COUNTING OF 1,926
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POSTAL VOTES AND ABOUT 1,000 ABSENTEE BALLOTS WILL PROBABLY

BRING FREEMAN'S MARGIN DOWN TO ABOUT ONE HUNDRED.

3. POST COMMENT:

NEVILLE WRAN, NEW LEADER OF THE NSW LABOR PARTY, STAGED AN ALL-OUT BATTLE FOR THE SEAT BUT BECAUSE OF THE CLOSENESS OF THE RESULTS AND FEDERAL ISSUES INJECTED INTO THE STATE RACE, HIS PARTY LEADERSHIP OR PRESTIGE DID NOT SUFFER. MANY OBSERVERS BLAME THE FRIDAY ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE FEDERAL LABOR GOVERNMENT OF HIGHER INFLATION RATES FOR THE LAST QUARTER AS TIPPING THE BALANCE IN FAVOR OF THE LIBERAL PARTY. ALP CANDIDATE CLEARY COMMENTED ON SUNDAY, "IN THE LABOR AREA WHERE WE EXPECTED A LARGE NUMBER OF VOTES, THEY JUST DIDN'T TURN OUT", WHICH PERHAPS ADDS CREDENCE TO THE REPORTED GROWING CONCERN AMONG AUSTRALIANS ON THE ISSUE OF INFLATION. THE STATE LIBERAL/COUNTRY COALITION MAINTAINS ITS THREE SEAT MAJORITY IN NSW.
MARSHALL

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